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BOOK REVIEWS.

VIRGINIA'S ATTITUDE TOWARD SLAVERY AND SECESSION. By Beverley B. Munford. *Humanitatem Amoremque Patriæ Colite*. Longmans, Green & Co., New York, London, Bombay and Calcutta, 1909; pp. 298.

As Mr. Munford's most valuable book will be reviewed in the January, 1910, number of this Magazine by a distinguished historian, whose own studies have made him an especially good judge of the momentous subjects of which this book treats, the use which will now be made of the advance sheets will necessarily be limited.

The attitude of a people toward slavery is a matter of utmost import in the history of that people, and equally so is the cause which would make that people secede from a government they had helped so largely to form and were deeply devoted to, and enter into a bloody war. An author who would discuss in a manner worthy of attention the vital questions which this book treats of should have a large and intimate knowledge of the history of Virginia and of the United States, together with a sympathetic understanding of the people of the State such as no stranger can possibly have, and yet a freedom from prejudice and a capacity to appreciate the aims and ideals of all parties and sections.

It is fortunate for the cause of historic truth that the author of this book combines so many of these qualities. Mr. Munford is connected by descent and education with much that is best in Virginia's past, and has a loving veneration for her great men and great deeds; but he is also distinctly a man of the new age and has been in close touch with all movements for the moral, political and intellectual improvement of the State. He has always been an earnest student of history and politics and, as a successful lawyer, has been trained to weigh evidence.

The author's thesis is that "Virginia did not secede in order to extend slavery into the Territories, or to prevent its threatened destruction within its own borders," nor was its secession due to "a wanton desire to destroy the Union or from hostility to the ideals of the founders;" but that "the attempt of the Federal Government to coerce the cotton States was the proximate cause of Virginia secession." To sustain the ground he has taken he gives a series of exceedingly clear and definite arguments based on indisputable evidences.

The introduction contains one of the most concise and yet comprehensive accounts of the various causes or supposed causes of the Civil War which has ever been published.

The author next takes up Virginia's attitude toward slavery in the Colonial period, describes the numerous ineffectual attempts to check or stop the slave-trade, and gives an account of the measures to that end contained in the State Constitution and Bill of Rights. The succeeding chapter treats of the early Virginia (State) statutes abolishing the slave-trade, and of the part played by the State in the enactment of the Ordinance of 1787. This is followed by two chapters telling, with much wealth of evidence and illustration, of Virginia's opposition to the foreign slave-trade at the time of the adoption of the United States Constitution and later.

In the same line of investigation tending to develop the attitude of Virginia toward slavery, next come chapters treating of various statutes in regard to the subject, including those permitting and others prohibiting emancipation. After this is given a very full discussion of the celebrated movement for abolition or gradual emancipation in the Virginia Legislature in 1832, of the causes of its failure and of the growth of pro-slavery sentiment which soon followed.

This increase of sentiment in favor of slavery is held to be largely due to the violence of the abolition societies that were just beginning their work in the North, and a careful study is made of these societies, with quotations from the opinions of prominent men of various sections in regard to them.

The author next shows that this increase of pro-slavery ideas did not interfere with the steady efforts of many Virginians, and indeed of the State Government, to effect a gradual emancipation through colonization. Accounts of the State colonization societies and of the action of the United States Government are given, and numerous instances are cited of individual efforts in this direction. Much of the material in this chapter is derived from private and hitherto unpublished sources.

The 12th chapter continues this subject, and the 13th, 14th and 15th give a remarkable collection of anti-slavery opinions by prominent Virginians. The two chapters which follow these illustrate the widely spread feeling in Virginia against slavery by extracts from a large number of wills and deeds emancipating negroes. These chapters contain information hitherto almost unknown, and will be a revelation to most readers.

In chapters 18 to 22, other reasons why the secession of Virginia was not to protect slavery are most forcibly shown, and each statement made is carefully based on facts and figures. The small number of slave-holders in proportion to the white population is clearly shown as is the consequent small proportion of slave-holding soldiers in the Virginia forces in the Confederate Army. The injurious effects of slavery on the prosperity of the State, and the intense feeling among the people

against slave-traders and slave-trading are described and the charge that Virginia made a business of slave-breeding for sale is answered.

Mr. Munford recognizes that, after showing what he conceives was the attitude of Virginia toward slavery, and giving so many evidences in support of his belief, he must answer the question: "If this was the case why did not Virginia abolish slavery or provide for gradual emancipation?"

The answer is given in three most carefully studied chapters. Then, turning from the past to the period immediately preceding the war, he discusses the status of the slave controversy at the time Virginia seceded, the attitude of certain Northern States in regard to fugitive slaves, and the violence of the abolitionists, including their advocacy of disunion rather than a continuance of slavery.

The third section of the book begins by narrating, succinctly, what Virginia had done for the Union and why it should have loved what it had so great a part in making, and then describes the efforts of the State, through the Peace Conference, to again bring about harmony; the large majority for the Union in the elections for the Convention, and the earnest attempts of that Convention to re-establish peace in the country.

The last section continues the study of the proceedings of the Convention, and shows that it was only after coercion of the cotton States by the Federal Government became certain, that the large Union majority felt that the only honest and patriotic course lay in voting for secession.

In view of the fact that, as stated above, a review is to appear in the next issue of this Magazine, anything in the nature of an estimate has been avoided as far as possible. The book is, however, so marked a contribution to American history that it has been deemed worth while, even in advance of the regular review, to give some account of it. It will be published about the middle of this month.